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EDITORIALS.

The American vs. the British Association for the Advancement of Science. A Comparison.—Comparisons may be odious, especially to the less favored party, but they nevertheless afford the best means for determining shortcomings and the way to improvement. For years we in America have been asking why our Association is so inferior to that of Great Britain; why it is so much less representative of science in the country. Perhaps a detailed comparison of the two Associations will tell us.

The British Association has a membership of about 5000; the American Association of about 2000. The British Association has invested funds, including balance in banks, of nearly \$70,000; the American Association has about \$6,000. The meetings of the British Association are attended by from 1300 to 4000 paying members and "associates"; the American Association had an attendance at its Detroit meeting, in 1897, of less than 300; at its Boston meeting, in 1898, of about 900 "registered delegates." The published *Report of the British Association* for 1897 contained 1132 pages; the *Proceedings of the American Association* for 1897 had 579 pages, very largely matter of transitory value. The membership of the British Association admittedly and evidently includes practically all the scientific men of Great Britain. In the American Association it is the absence of many of the most important names which is striking. Thus, of the professors of all grades in the twenty principal universities and colleges of the United States, we find that the members of the American Association constituted in physics about 54 per cent; in chemistry, 51 per cent; in geology, 74 per cent; in biology, 27 per cent. The British Association voted, in 1897, \$5295 in grants; the American Association, \$400. On the other hand, while the British Association expended \$2770 in salaries, rent, and office expenses, the American Association spent \$2867 on these items. Thus, while the British Association spends 24 per cent of its receipts upon research, ours spends less than 7 per cent; but while our cousins devote 13 per cent of the gross receipts to salaries and office expenses, we spend thus 48 per cent.

Various causes have been assigned for this difference between the two Associations. The small membership and attendance at the

meetings of our Association have been ascribed to the large size of our country. Nearly all the British meetings are held in Great Britain proper, the extreme distance between meeting places on this island being less than 500 miles. On the other hand, the average distance between the successive meeting places of the last seven meetings of the American Association was 767 miles, and the extreme range about 1700 miles. To have attended all the meetings since the one in Boston in 1880, a Boston member must have traveled about 28,000 miles, or one and a half times the distance around the earth at this latitude. Even at a two-thirds fare this would have cost him over \$500 in car fare alone, not to mention the discomforts of long journeys. The Boston member who has to economize is fortunate if he can attend two meetings in a decade, and the same is true of the member from Washington or Minneapolis. Thus the great distance between successive meeting places prevents a continuity in the attendance, and this results in loss of interest and interferes with that continuity of endeavor which is essential to the systematic direction of scientific research and the attainment of increased facilities for scientific men. On the contrary, our society seems itself to lack direction. The council of one year votes to cut out all abstracts of papers from the *Proceedings*, and that of the next year rescinds the vote. One year, at one place, a member arouses enthusiasm enough to get a committee appointed to conduct some investigation; and next year, at a place 1000 miles away, nobody hears about the committee, which is discontinued or continued with the "*personnel* the same as last year." There are only two remedies for this state of things; either to break up the Association into Atlantic, Mississippi, and Pacific branches, or else to make the meetings so interesting and valuable that members will attend them despite expense. The latter solution seems to us the best one to work toward.

What can be done to secure this increased interest? This is the vital question. No doubt the determination by the best scientific men of the country to attend the meetings, at the sacrifice of time and money, is the first step. To get this step, however, seems to demand certain reforms. First, the finances should be improved. Cut down salaries, office rent, and office expenses. The American Society of Naturalists, which issues *Records* of nearly fifty pages, pays less than \$50 per year for clerical assistance. Why cannot the American Association get along on \$1000 a year for salaries? This would release over \$1000 for grants for research. The grants would call forth new committees. Formal reports should be required from

each committee, and these should be printed in the *Proceedings*. The value of the *Proceedings* will be thus enhanced and a more general interest will be awakened among scientific men in the work of their Association.

To carry on the enlarged work of the Association, additional funds will have to be acquired. The plan adopted by the British Association, of making visitors and ladies accompanying members pay for the privileges of the meetings, seems to us in every way admirable. The income of the British Association in 1897 was £580 from annual assessments, but £2242 from non-members. Thus the non-scientific contributed to the support of science. Finally, to increase the membership of the Association, a systematic canvas should be made of the scientific societies of the country, to the ends that their quality may be determined; that we may accept, as it were, "on certificate" and without special election, any member of a suitable society; and that these societies may be led to coöperate with the national association in promoting the interests of science in the land.

Zoological Bibliography. — The second report of the committee of the Royal Society upon Zoological Bibliography and Publication has been issued. It contains the following suggestions:

(1) That each part of a serial publication should have the date of actual publication, as near as may be, printed on the wrapper, and, when possible, on the last sheet sent to press.

(2) That authors' separate copies should not be distributed privately, before the paper has been published in the regular manner.

(3) That authors' separate copies should be issued with the original pagination, and plate numbers clearly indicated on each page and plate, and with a reference to the original place of publication.

(4) That it is desirable to express the subject of one's paper in its title, while keeping the title as concise as possible.

(5) That new species should be properly diagnosed, and figured where possible.

(6) That new names should not be proposed in irrelevant footnotes or anonymous paragraphs.

(7) That references to previous publications should be made fully and correctly, if possible, in accordance with one of the recognized sets of rules for quotation, such as that recently adopted by the French Zoological Society.

With all of which the *American Naturalist* is in the closest sympathy. A few comments, however, may be of interest. The second of the